



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**DEERFIELD VALLEY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY FAIRGROUNDS, CHARLEMONT, APPROVED
FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds in Charlemont for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 9, 2011, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds in the National Register will help preserve this community’s rare 19th-century fairgrounds.”

The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds, Park Street, is significant for the role it played in the organized movement for agricultural improvement in the early 19th century, as well as in the continuation of providing information and incentives to farmers to adopt progressive agricultural practices. The fairgrounds, also known as Charlemont Fairgrounds or Memorial Park, occupy an elevated plateau above the town, which is situated in the eastern foothills of the Berkshire Mountains along the Deerfield River. Opened in 1871, the fairgrounds comprise approximately 24 acres. Three distinctive features—the racetrack, grandstand, and exhibition building—were all constructed between 1885 and 1892. The grounds also include open space that was designed to support temporary structures, corrals, concessions, amusements, and vehicle parking during fair times. The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society’s fair ended in 1934, and since the town of Charlemont acquired the property in 1940, the fairgrounds have been under the jurisdiction of the town’s Parks and Recreation Commission. Regular fair activities were reintroduced as “Yankee Doodle Days” in 1952, and after a brief hiatus, resumed in 1997. The Friends of the Charlemont Fairgrounds was created to contribute to the preservation of the property, with volunteers contributing funds, materials, and labor to construct new features.

The Deerfield Valley Agricultural Society Fairgrounds is one of 7 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation’s official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission’s programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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